



The FLAP

News for the Folks of Lake Accotink Park

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

Spring
2007

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Canoeing: An American Tradition

The next time you walk by Lake Accotink Park's canoe fleet racked on the beach, take note! You are looking at a boat that has not only figured prominently in American history for thousands of years, but also one that has remained almost unchanged in design. What we think of as the lowly canoe was once used by native peoples across North and South America and the Caribbean. Later, Europeans recognized the canoe as well suited to the American landscape and adapted it for their uses as well.

The word "canoe" is adapted from a Carib Indian word meaning "dugout." Throughout

the Caribbean area, canoes were made of large tree trunks hollowed out by a slow burning fire. This heavier design created a strong watercraft capable of ocean travel. Although used on rivers across North America, the dugout canoe is most commonly associated with native groups on the Pacific coast where large cedar trees were the material of choice to construct vessels ranging from smaller fishing boats to larger boats suitable for whaling.

Perhaps the most well known version of the canoe was crafted by stretching a smooth, waterproof bark such as birch or

spruce across a frame of wooden ribs. The bark seams were stitched together and waterproofed with resin. Although surprisingly strong for such a seemingly fragile design, these canoes required specialized storage techniques to protect the materials from drying out and cracking. Bark canoes were either stored on elevated racks upside down under a shade or weighted and submerged in a body of water.

The combination of shoal waters and faster moving streams prevalent in the American wilderness necessitated a boat with the canoe's unique charac-

teristics. The canoe, regardless of material, is strong, but also able to carry heavy loads in shallow water. Canoes are easily and quickly maneuvered by one person, though larger canoes can accommodate upwards of a dozen men. In the event a stream or river was impassable, canoes could be easily portaged, or carried, and moved overland to the next passable body of water, making them useful for transporting hunting or war parties.

When Europeans came to the North

(Continued on page 3)



Experience Lake Accotink by canoe.

Thanks for Asking:



Why can't I take plants or other natural materials from parks?

We frequently receive calls from citizens asking if they can chop a fallen tree they've seen for firewood. We may observe visitors trying to remove plants from the park, and too often we hear stories from other visitors detailing their observations of others removing flowers and plants from Lake Accotink Park. Officially, these activities all constitute poaching. The term is likely to conjures images of animal hunting, but it covers a much broader range of infringements on public property. Poaching is illegal and is a serious threat to the preservation of parkland.

Park Authority regulation §1.22 *Wildlife and Habitat Protection* states: No person shall remove from a park any plant or fungus (e.g., mushrooms) or parts thereof including, but not limited to, cuttings, flowers, seeds, berries, nuts or foliage, without the express written permission of the Park Authority. No person shall remove or use any wood, wood chips, sod, earth, humus, rocks, minerals, fossils, sand, water or any other natural material from a park without the express written permission of the Park Authority.

(Continued on page 3)

Calling All Kids:

Come out to play!

What are the kids doing over Spring Break? That slight pause in the school year may seem brief, but there's every reason to make the most of it by exposing your child--or grandchild--to new experiences and the chance to make new memories. And a great way to do that is by sending the kids to camp.

The lucky ones will spend each day at Lake Accotink Park, where camps will be in full swing from April 2 through 6, 2007. Among the offerings for Spring Break are *Watershed Explorers Camp*, a great option for nature enthusiasts; *Doggone Fun Camp*, where dogs and kids play and learn together; *Tennis Camp*, for beginners who want to learn something new; *Net Results Sports Camp*, where basketball, tennis and volleyball provide the backdrop for noncompetitive play; and *Adventure Race Camp*, an exciting new camp which combines mountain biking, hiking and paddle sports.

And what about plans for the Summer? Once again, that one's solved for you. All summer long, Lake Accotink Park's camps allow area youth to enjoy many exciting recreational and educational activities in the great outdoors. The staff at Lake Accotink Park are busy planning activities, organizing materials and hiring staff for seven unique summer camp offerings.

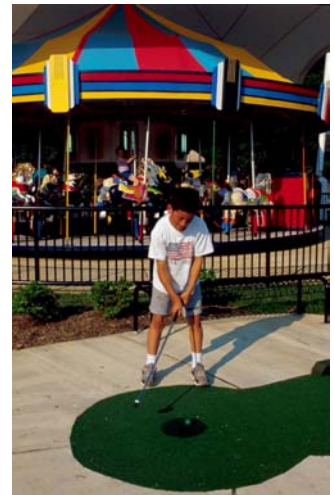
For those seeking a traditional outdoor camp, *Lakeside Fun Camp* provides two weeks of fun each session. Campers get to try boating, fishing, hiking, crafts and more--while enjoying the unique experience of a lakefront setting. Now in its third year, *Watershed Explorers Camp* is perfect for those children who hold a special interest in the natural world. This camp's activities are designed to stimulate awareness and respect for natural resources and the importance of protecting them. Similarly, *History Adventure Camp*, with its focus on historical and cultural resources, teaches campers about the history of the park and stories from the past.

Making sure to include teens in the picture, Lake Accotink Park is rolling out the *Community Leadership Academy* for a second year. This specialized camp engages teens in conservation projects and leadership-building workshops while mixing in recreational activities such as canoeing, hiking, and fishing. Another innovative camp is the park's *Doggone Fun Camp*, the only camp that dogs attend along with their human companions. The goal is to teach responsible pet ownership and, by extension, a better appreciation for animals in general. In the realm of

(Continued on page 6)

Lake Accotink Park Spring Marina Hours

- Open weekends only beginning **May 5 - June 17**
- 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.
- Facilities include an antique carousel, miniature golf course, boat rentals and snack bar
- Birthday packages are available! Call 703-569-3464



NOW HIRING!

**Are you interested in working at Lake
Accotink Park's marina this summer (May - October)?**

Stop by the main office on one of the following dates to fill out an application and interview with a manager. No appointment is necessary - just bring two references with you!

- Saturday March 24, noon - 4 p.m.
- Saturday April 14, noon - 4 p.m.



Fairfax County Park Authority Trout Stocking Program

February 9 - April 22

A Park Authority-issued fishing pass must be purchased from one of the two parks.

Season Pass:

- \$35 (ages 16 - 59)
- \$30 (ages 6 - 11, 60+)

Daily Pass:

- \$10 (ages 16 - 59)
- \$9 (ages 6 - 11, 60+)

Lake Accotink Park

Trout Stocking Dates

- February 9
- February 23
- March 9
- March 23
- April 2

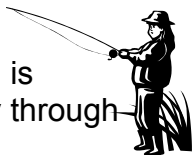
Lake Fairfax Park

Trout Stocking Dates

- February 16
- March 2
- March 16
- March 30
- April 13

All Game and Inland Fisheries laws apply. A Virginia fishing license is required.

This program is funded solely through pass sales.



(Canoeing continued from page 1)

American continent, they quickly recognized the value of the canoe for the same reason native groups did. The lucrative fur trade in the 18th century required the mass production of canoes for European use and helped expand fur trade and settlement.

However, it was not until the second half of the 19th century that recreational canoe use came into vogue. John McGregor, a Scottish lawyer, designed and sailed throughout Europe and the Middle East in a canoe called the Rob Roy. The Rob Roy is not what we think of as a traditional canoe – it had a deck, a mast and sails in addition to paddles – but it sparked the imaginations of many. Canoe clubs were formed in Europe as well as America, and the canoe has been inextricably linked with the idea of connecting with the American wilderness ever since.

Though wooden canoes are still made, today we are most familiar with the post- World War II style canoe made from a synthetic material such as aluminum or fiberglass. Aluminum became a popular material because factories, which had been manufacturing the material for airplanes during World

War II, were forced after the war to find a way to fit back into a society with a lesser demand for mass produced aircraft. Aluminum proved to be highly durable – more so than wood or canvas – and needed minimal maintenance and repair. Technological advances offered fiberglass and Kevlar composites as desirable materials as well.

Spring is a great time to rent a canoe at Lake Accotink Park and enjoy a leisurely afternoon paddling around the lake observing the seasonal flora and fauna. All water activities should be undertaken with care, however. Canoes can be unstable and tip if not handled properly. If you're new to canoeing, attend one of Lake Accotink Park's spring canoeing workshops to learn basic boating safety and canoe handling tips so that you can enjoy this traditional pastime. And when you're on the water, no matter how expert your canoeing skills, ALWAYS wear a personal flotation device (PFD). At Lake Accotink, PFDs come free with every canoe rental.

Workshop Dates: May 5, 2 - 3:30 and
May 19, 2 - 3:30 pm
Call 703-569-3464 to register.

(Thanks for Asking...continued from page 1)

But to just say it's illegal or against the rules doesn't really answer the question of "why." After all, why would it matter if one family picked wild berries or one person removed a wild-flower plant to bring home to their own garden? Because it's not just one person. Plant poaching and removal of natural resources is a widespread, serious problem – not just for Fairfax County parks, but one documented on parkland all over the country. Plant poaching is like death by a thousand small cuts. In fact, over-collection of plants is one of the major contributing factors to species endangerment. This means it ranks on a level with overall habitat destruction, making plant poaching comparable to clearing land for new construction in terms of the severity of its impact on the natural landscape.

Wild berries, nuts, mushrooms, plants and downed trees all provide food and shelter for hungry wildlife. If these food sources are removed by people, there will be less for birds, rabbits, foxes and other animals to eat. These animals will be forced to look for food elsewhere, perhaps in a neighboring home's yard. Preserving parkland as viable habitat - one that provides all the food, water and shelter an animal needs to survive - helps reduce conflicts between wildlife and humans. It helps keeps animals off roadways and out of people's gardens seeking other food sources.

Locally, wild ginseng is a frequently poached plant species. It has been collected to the point that many of the once widespread populations on parkland have either disappeared or are no longer sustainable, which means they

(Continued on page 5)

Biking Classes Forming Now-



Improve your mountain biking skills at one of the County's hotspots!

Want to try biking the trails at Lake Accotink but not ready to go it alone? That doesn't have to stop you. The park offers group instruction in biking, with the spring session starting to roll on May 5. Classes are geared for beginners ages 9 and up. Spring classes meet every Saturday from 10:30 to 12:30 for five weeks. Participants will cover miles of scenic trails while improving their fitness levels and learning tips and techniques from an experienced instructor.

But maybe you don't have a bike. Again, that doesn't have to stop you. You can rent a bike and helmet for use during each class. The park's special rate is \$50 for all five classes in the session.

Biking is a positive, healthy activity that families and friends can enjoy together. Lake Accotink Park's biking classes allow you to...

- meet people with similar interests;
- share stories from the road and trail;
- learn and practice new techniques to take your biking skills to the next level;
- rejuvenate through time spent in the natural world;

- nurture mind and body through fresh air and exercise.

Pat Childers, an instructor for Lake Accotink Park and co-founder of Trips for Kids Metro DC, has led more than 100 mountain bike rides starting in the park. "Lake Accotink has some of the DC area's best trails located in a beautiful natural setting. I've taken riders of all ages and skill levels for rides at the park and everyone enjoys the trail system. As an instructional setting, the park works well due to the wide main lake trail for learning the basics of shifting, balancing and braking; and then as students' skills and trail knowledge progress, the park's more difficult singletrack trails offer an appropriate challenge.

"Mountain biking provides more than just exercise," Childers continues. My students, my family and I have had the opportunity to see first hand from our bike seats all kinds of wildlife at Lake Accotink Park - snakes, deer, turtles and even the occasional owl sighting. Finding all of this just three miles away from one of the busiest highway inter-sections in America is nothing short of astounding!"



Children's Events:
Noon - 3 p.m.

**Easter fun
for pets
and people!**

April 7

Pet Events:
4 - 6 p.m.



photos with the Easter Bunny on a keepsake disk



Easter egg hunts

\$ 8 per child



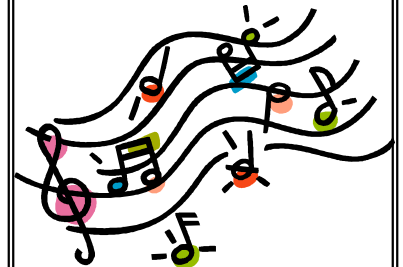
photos with the Easter Bunny on a keepsake disk



hunt for hidden dog treats

\$6 per pet

Register early! 703-569-3464



FREE concerts
every Friday night
beginning

June 1 at 7:30 p.m.

**Lake Accotink Park's
Large Lake Pavilion**

Register for Summer Camps now!

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks



Campers learn to paddle at Lakeside Fun Camp

Trail Watch Needs You! Volunteer at Lake Accotink Park

If you enjoy spending time on the network of trails that meander within and around Lake Accotink Park, consider helping out as a Trail Watch volunteer. Trail Watch volunteers play a valuable role in the community by extending the work that park staff does to keep trails safe and enjoyable for everyone. These volunteers report problems such as safety hazards, vandalism, suspicious activities and trail maintenance needs, and they may also provide information to visitors they encounter along the trail.

Trail Watch volunteers receive a thorough orientation on what types of problems to report to park staff. Volunteers are not asked to do anything outside their comfort zone. In the case of people breaking park rules or behaving inappropriately, volunteers are not expected to confront the offenders but rather are asked to summon park staff to the scene. Rarely do volunteers encounter serious violations. More common are situations such as damage to signs along the trail, dogs being allowed to roam off leash, a biker in need of directions, dumping of

trash or yard debris, trail damage from erosion or blockage due to downed trees, and lost eyeglasses or other belongings.

Lake Accotink Park's Trail Watch program allows volunteers to choose the level of structure that works best for them. For example, some come once a week, sign in at the park office and pick up a park two-way radio and first aid kit, then end their shift back at the park office to return the radio and first aid kit and to record any maintenance or other issues in the Trail Watch log. Other Trail Watch volunteers choose a less structured format; they serve every bit as the eyes and ears of park staff, but they "do Trail Watch" without setting a schedule with the park or carrying a park-issued radio or first aid kit. Anyone who totes a cell phone while walking, hiking or jogging on the trails can play this important role. No matter what level of involvement Trail Watch volunteers choose, their efforts and dedication exemplify what it is to be a good neighbor -- taking action to improve the quality of life in the community.

(Continued on page 6)

(Thanks for Asking...continued from page 3)

will eventually disappear. Reducing the population of a plant community compromises the plant's ability to successfully reproduce. The pink lady slipper is another common illegally harvested species. The flowers are beautiful and can be expensive if purchased in a nursery. However, orchids are delicate plants, and most die from transplant shock. The expense to parks and the natural landscape is far greater than the purchase price of a nursery-grown plant. Something else we hear quite a bit from our long-term park users is that there are fewer wildflowers than there used to be. That loss is attributable to poaching.

Plant collection can cause a host of other problems that may at first seem unrelated. Digging up plants' roots can unearth an artifact, which may be pocketed by someone. Now poaching has contributed to relic hunting. The ground disturbance may be harmful to other plants the poacher was not intending to take. Additionally, plant roots help hold soil in place. Too much ground disturbance can cause erosion. Now plant poaching has caused something not just unsightly, but also harmful to water quality. Our

clean drinking water supply and aquatic animals' habitats are compromised.

We all lose when plants are illegally harvested. Our parkland is robbed of its natural beauty - nothing will be left but the ugly tangle of invasive vines. Our wildlife has no food for which to forage. A select few will be profiting from our collective losses. This law is in place to help us protect our natural resources and ensure they are available for the enjoyment of future generations - our grandchildren's grandchildren.

We can all be a part of protecting our parkland and the solution to this odious problem. Report suspicious activity to Lake Accotink Park's main office (703-569-0285) and to the Fairfax County police non-emergency number (703-691-2131). Don't confront, but do try to note a description of the person or vehicle. When landscaping, only purchase plants that have been grown in nurseries. And follow the Girl Scout rule: "Take nothing from the woods but memories and leave nothing but footprints" - on the trail, of course.

(Trail Watch Needs You continued from page 5)

Active and committed volunteers are the backbone of our parks. And just as trails connect with other trails, Trail Watch volunteers enjoy connecting with other trail users. Trail Watch is a great way to get to know more of the park, to share an appreciation with others for nature and the outdoors, enjoy exercise, and the good feeling that comes with knowing you are performing a valuable service for your community. Ed Macmillan, a resident of North Springfield for thirty years and now retired, tries to come out once every week. Explaining his motivation for doing Trail Watch, Ed says, "Primarily it's health reasons that keep me going. I'm out walking anyways around the neighborhood. Walking the trails is eas-

ier for me than walking on concrete sidewalks. Plus I like the outdoor environment, the wildlife, and Lake Accotink's unique features that appeal to me as a railroad buff and history buff. I've seen quite a few deer, some foxes, birds — there's a blue heron that makes its home down by the dam — there are lots of good reasons to keep it up."

If you would like to join Ed and our other volunteers on the Trail Watch circuit, call the park office at 703-569-0285, TTY 703-569-5200. Or fill out the online volunteer application at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/volunteer/accoapp.htm>

Hope to see you in the park!

(Calling All Kids continued from page 2)

sports camps, the park's half-day *Tennis Camp* for kids and young teens provides instruction and practice in this popular sport. And for those looking to mix it up, *Net Results Sports Camp* rounds out the afternoons with fun-filled sports action on the court.

To ensure the highest quality camp experience, enrollment is limited. Campers are grouped by age and all camp counselors meet stringent safety standards in accordance with state licensing requirements. Also, not all camps are offered all summer. *Lake-side Fun Camp* sessions are two weeks each; all other camps are organ-

ized as one-week sessions during specific months.

Full-day camps at Lake Accotink Park Camps meet from 9:00 to 4:00, with extended care available during the summer from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Half-day camps meet either in the morning from 9:00 to noon or in the afternoon from 1:00 to 4:00. For session dates, times, ages, fees, and complete camp descriptions, refer to the camp listing in this issue of the FLAP; or pick up *ParkTakes* magazine and browse through the *Camps* section; or browse online listings at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes.htm where you can register at the same time.



CAMP COUNSELORS WANTED

**Spring Break April 2 - 6 &
Summer June 25 - August 17**

Be a part of making childhood memories!



Call 703-569-0285 for an application now.

Camps include:

Lakeside Fun Camp ☼ Watershed Explorers Camp ☼ History Adventure Camp
☼ Net Results Sports Camp ☼ Dog Care Camp ☼ Community Leadership Academy

5 Great Things about Spring at Lake Accotink Park

By Tawny Hammond,
Park Manager

-  The melodious sounds of our amphibian friends as they begin another life cycle. - Take a walk along the creek and look for vernal pools.
- The explosion of green as the flora comes out again around us. - Bring a field guide and try to identify the native Virginia wildflowers. 
-  The exotic migratory waterfowl stop by for a much needed respite on their arduous journey to their summer breeding grounds. - Bring a pair of binoculars and relax on a bench overlooking the lake.
- The sounds of laughter and conversation filling the park as people venture outdoors again. - Lace up your walking or running shoes or hop on your bike and enjoy some outdoor recreation. 
-  The warmth of the sun as the days get longer and the sun hangs higher in the sky. - Don't forget your sunscreen!

Check it Out:

Catch up with the new and exciting things going on at Lake Accotink Park!

Have you heard...about Lake Accotink Park's Invasive Management Area project? Next time you are walking Lake Accotink Park's loop trail, take a moment to notice the newly cleared area near the Danbury Forest neighborhood. This project, part of an agency-wide effort to control invasive plant growth at our parks, was spearheaded at Lake Accotink Park by a park volunteer and member of the Friends of Accotink Creek who targeted kudzu in that area. Kudzu is a quick growing vine that, once introduced to an area, spreads uncontrollably crowding out native plants used by wildlife for food and shelter. This hardy soul could be found most Wednesday mornings, sometimes with a small volunteer crew (many times alone), hand pulling the vine and marking the locations of desirable plant species struggling for space. Lake Accotink Park is fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers!

Have you noticed...the new black fence around the miniature golf course and carousel area? The new fence and gate will help protect the facility when it is not in use. Maintenance of this area has been a major challenge as access to the area was not controlled, and many visitors thought it was an great place to let the kids romp and play. Consequently flower beds, stone work and mulch were continually disturbed and messy looking. Prior to the fence installation, the miniature golf course was frequently damaged (broken drain covers, missing hole plugs, disturbed stone-work and more) by intentional vandalism. The miniature

golf course and the carousel are both fee areas and are only open to visitors paying to use those facilities seasonally.

And...after being dismantled for several months, the Civil War Trails program interpretive sign has been reinstalled at the trestle parking lot. The interpretive sign was significantly damaged as was an accessible parking sign by a car that hit both. Please remember to call the non-emergency police number (703-691-2131) or Lake Accotink Park's main office (703-569-3464) if you see anyone in the park doing something that looks dangerous or suspicious.

Have you seen...the large parking lot at the railroad trestle lately? A new dumpster pad and enclosure have been installed to hide the unsightly trash dumpsters.

And finally...make sure you check out the Large Lake Pavilion. Renovations by the Fairfax County Park Authority's Park Operations Division were recently completed. The wall around the pavilion to help control erosion has been finished. A new platform has also been installed to level out the ground around the restrooms making for a more user-friendly walking surface. It is not only a popular rental facility, but is also the site for the Braddock Nights concert series, which begins the first Friday in June. The pavilion looks great!



18th Annual Cardboard Boat Regatta Sunday June 3

Learn to build
YOUR boat
April 14 at
10 a.m.

\$7 per person

703-569-0285

Try Something New!

In addition to biking classes, Lake Accotink Park also offers classes in other sports and fitness activities, art, dog obedience, pet first aid, canoeing and more. See our complete listing of spring classes elsewhere in this issue of the FLAP.

Classes are available for all age groups, including children, teens, and adults. The park's outdoor classes in tennis, soccer, basketball and biking offer children a healthy alternative to Saturday morning television. For teens, biking and volleyball are popular. In art class, seniors and others looking to try something new spend quality time creating unique works of art while enjoying the company of others working toward the same goal. And don't forget, even the family dog can get into the act through dog obedience classes and Walking for Fitness Doggie and Me.

Most classes meet once per week. Session days and times fit a variety of schedules. Art classes are held in the park's main office; most other classes are held outdoors. To register, call 703-222-4664 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes.htm.

Meet Matthew...

Matthew Wickliffe, a senior at Hayfield Secondary School in Alexandria, has worked at Lake Accotink Park since last May. Matthew began as a volunteer. After deciding he might like



to spend his summers working at the park, he interviewed at a March open hire for a position at Lake Accotink's marina. Matthew describes his job as "doing pretty much anything that needs to get done, such as pushing off and catching boats, cleaning bathrooms, running the snack bar and cleaning up around the lake."

Matthew lives in the Alexandria section of Fairfax County with his parents, an older brother, a younger sister, a dog named Maggie and a hamster. He says the drive to Lake Accotink Park can sometimes be "long," but he feels it is well worth it to have a job he enjoys. His favorite part of working at Lake Accotink Park is being outside to enjoy nice weather. He describes his co-workers as "great." In fact, Matthew says he was "shy" prior to being hired, but adds that getting to know the staff at the park has changed him in a positive way by helping him to become more outgoing.

Matthew is a very dedicated member of Lake Accotink Park's team. After the marina facilities closed for the season, he helped winterize and maintain the facilities and prepare for and staff the park's seasonal special events. When his supervisor was temporarily assigned to assist with site operations at Clemmy-jontri Park, a newly opened park in McLean, Matthew was invited to help operate its carousel, and he proved to be an asset there. His most recent "special" assignment was to play Santa for the annual Pet Pictures with Santa Claws. After a winter break, he returned to Lake Accotink Park in order to assist with its spring trout stocking program and will return to his marina duties in May.

When asked what he would tell someone about Lake Accotink Park if he could only share one thing, Matthew replied, "It's a great place for a picnic in the late afternoon, and you can always find something fun to do there."

In his spare time, Matthew likes to work on cars, fish at Lake Accotink and ride his bike at Burke Lake Park.

Spring Watershed Cleanup

at
Lake Accotink
and
Brookfield Parks



Saturday March 31
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

The Bay starts HERE!

Meet at the Lake Accotink Park marina. Afterward, join staff for a complimentary hot dog lunch.

Fairfax County Park Authority



Lake Accotink Park
7500 Accotink Park Road
Springfield, Virginia 22150

Phone: 703-569-0285
TTY: 703-569-5200

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

Park Management:

Tawny Hammond, *Park Manager*
Julie Tahan, *Assistant Manager*
Lee Ann Shenefiel, *Operations Manager*
Ed Miller, *Maintenance Crew Chief*
Axel Boy, *Evening Supervisor*



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ADA Accommodations:

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations or alternative formats will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-8563 or (TTY) 703-803-3354 for additional information.